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August 4, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. EHRLICHMAN

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

I refer to Alex Butterfield's memoranda of June 24 and July 7 and John Brown's memorandum of July 14 which indicate the President's desire that action be taken by a group of prominent Americans to support the Administration's position on Vietnam. Copies of these memoranda are attached.

I have met with William Buckley and discussed the desirability of establishing such a movement with his assistance and guidance. Buckley expressed some interest and is investigating the feasibility of doing so. I would suggest that we hold further action in abeyance until we hear from him.

Attachments

cc: Alex Butterfield

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NSS review completed.

INFORMATION/ACTIONSECRET

July 17, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Dean Moor

THROUGH: John Holdridge

SUBJECT: Presidential Requests on Vietnam

The President is continuing to press his request that the White House staff take action to secure the formation of a committee of prominent citizens in support of Administration policy on Vietnam.

There have been three such requests from the President, as follows:

- a. A 24 June memorandum to Mr. Erlichman asking him to contact Bill Casey of ABM fame and set up a pro-Vietnam Committee (Tab A).
- b. A memorandum to you and John Erlichman on July 7th citing the anti-war statements of Arthur Flemming's group and making the same request (Tab B). This memorandum suggests that Nelson Rockefeller be asked to head the Committee. Our recommendation to you on this action is attached at Tab B.
- c. A memorandum of July 9th to Erlichman suggesting that Leo Cherne might be the man to head the Committee (Tab C).

Mr. Erlichman would like you to take responsibility for carrying out the request. In a memorandum of 8 July, he asked that you take over complete action on the project. On July 14, John Brown of Erlichman's staff forwarded the items in "a" and "b" above to you with a similar request (Tab D).

While it is clear that the President is deeply interested in this project, it is our feeling that the whole question of White House initiative in the formation of a pro-Administration group on Vietnam needs very careful examination. Although support from such a committee might prove valuable, knowledge of its origin would

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probably soon leak out and the action could backfire, being seen as an Administration effort to manage public opinion.

The decision on the propriety of such a step clearly needs the active counsel and judgment of White House personnel who specialize in assessing the domestic political climate. Mr. Erlichman and others, such as Mr. Herb Klein, should be closely involved, if not in fact play the main role should such a committee be formed.

If we attempt to make use of a group that is already in being, it would appear that our best bet is still the Douglas Committee. The present plans of this Committee, in fact, may offer at least a temporary answer to the President's request. A group from the Douglas Committee plans to visit Vietnam beginning around 10 August. Its intent is to return with a positive assessment of developments there and discreetly promote this assessment in the U.S. This group has requested pre-departure session with you, and we have asked by memorandum that you approve the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you discuss the President's requests with Mr. Erlichman, informing him that you have reservations concerning the desirability of a White House role in organizing a new pro-Vietnam Committee. You might wish to suggest that we await the return of the group from the Douglas Committee and assess the results of its report before we move to try and establish further citizen machinery in support of the Administration.

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DM:mib (7/17/69)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 24, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. EHRLICHMAN

There was a short piece in the President's news summary this morning which told of the Viet Cong spreading the word to its followers in South Vietnam that important U.S. political leaders and great numbers of American people "are standing up against Nixon and his war policy."

With reference to this account -- and undoubtedly a number of similar reports -- the President asked that you contact Bill Casey and get him to set up a pro-Vietnam committee.

ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD

cc: Mr. Flanigan

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July 7, 1969


MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
MR. EHRLICHMAN

The President has just read in a news summary that a group of 28 prominent Americans headed by Arthur Flemming are urging him to take new initiatives to end, "and not simply de-Americanize", the war in Vietnam. The news piece goes on to say that the Flemming group proposes specifically that the United States abandon its present policy of maintaining maximum military pressure on the enemy and begin reducing the scale of fighting "in every possible way" ... looking toward the prompt achievement of a standstill ceasefire. (Some of the 28 persons are: Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Dr. Andrew Cordier; Edwin Reischauer; Hans Morgenthau; Senator Tydings; and William B. Arthur, editor of Look magazine.)

With reference to this report the President wanted each of you to know that in his opinion we should most certainly be able to get another "28 prominent Americans" who would advocate the reverse. The thought occurred to him that quite possibly Nelson Rockefeller would undertake this ... and that it would be most effective if he were to do so.

Please look into the possibilities here and keep the President informed.

Thank you.


ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD

30 OCT 8 1969

July 7, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER (Information Only)
MR. EHRLICHMAN (Information Only)

A recent Frank Reynolds TV commentary dealt with Secretary Rogers' press conference ... but the thrust of the views expressed by Reynolds was that we should reduce the level of fighting by stopping our offensive operations.

The President noted that this was the same view taken by the Arthur Flemming group, and that the "halting of our offensive operations" seems to represent the new line.

A
ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD

NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION IN FULL 2012/04/02 : LOC-HAK-2-3-2-3

NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION IN FULL 2012/04/02 : LOC-HAK-2-3-2-3

ACTIONSECRET

July 11, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Dean Moor

THROUGH: John Holdridge

SUBJECT: Presidential Request

The President is concerned over the formation of Arthur Flemming's new committee, which is urging him in its public statements and letters to promptly end, "and not simply de-Americanize," the war in Vietnam. The President believes that the Administration should be able to get another group of prominent Americans together who would advocate the reverse. He thinks that Nelson Rockefeller might undertake this task (Tab A).

The President has asked that you and John Erlichman jointly look into the possibility of organizing such a group and keep him informed. It is my understanding from Mr. Erlichman's office that he believes you should take the main action in connection with this request and that he has so informed you by memorandum.

Although such a group might be formed from the ranks of prominent American conservatives, it is my frank belief that the presumed benefits are, at best, questionable. Among the potential disadvantages are the following:

-- Despite any efforts we might make to conceal its origin, the group would probably be tagged as an Administration-sponsored, pro-war maneuver.

-- If it were formed along the lines envisioned by the President (i. e., 28 prominent Americans) it would almost certainly be seen as a deliberate effort to counter the Flemming group, and would probably have the effect of increasing public attention directed to Flemming's actions.

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-- It would involve the Administration in an effort to create a managed opinion element in influential American circles, a practice which tended largely to deepen the creditability gap for the last Administration.

The only in hand organization that might fill the bill is the so-called Douglas Committee with which we are in touch, and which has undertaken a very low-posture support for U.S. policy since 20 January. Some of its members, however, say that this group is finding it increasingly difficult to take a united stand behind present U.S. policy, and it is therefore questionable whether they would be interested in taking a position such as the President apparently envisions. The Douglas group, moreover, has consistently sought to avoid any overt suggestion of support for Administration policy per se.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you discuss this request personally with Mr. Erlichman informing him of your reservations concerning its advisability, and suggesting that a joint memorandum be prepared for the President outlining the pitfalls and difficulties inherent in the proposal.

Attachment

DM:mlb (7/11/69)

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TAB C

MEMORANDUM

439

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 9, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR

John Ehrlichman

FROM THE PRESIDENT

PM

In preparing the lists of people for groups like the Casey operation, I think we have overlooked Leo Cherne. He is a real goer and I want a contact made with him immediately in the event that no contact has been made to see if we can't enlist him and his group in our various operations supporting our military and foreign policy actions. Buchanan or Price will know about him.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 14, 1969

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR

HENRY KISSINGER

It is requested that you follow-up on two Presidential requests addressed to Mr. Ehrlichman which tie in closely with our previous action memorandum (log no. 609) to you dated July 8th. Subject of that memorandum is "President's request for the establishment of a group of prominent Americans who support the Administration's position in Vietnam."

The requests that I refer to are attached at Tabs A and B. At Tab A the President has requested that we contact Bill Casey and get him to set-up a Pro-Vietnam Committee. As indicated by the additional memoranda attached at Tab A, Bill Casey may not be the appropriate individual to head-up the Pro-Vietnam Committee. However, several other names are suggested by Peter Flanigan.

In the memorandum at Tab B the President requests that we contact Leo Cherne and attempt to enlist him and his group in our various operations supporting our military and foreign policy actions.

These two items tie in quite closely with the intent of the President's request for establishment of a group of prominent Americans who support the Administration's foreign policies.

JRB
John R. Brown

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.: 709

Date: Saturday, July 12, 1969

Time: 4:00 P.M.

FOR ACTION: DR. KISSINGER

cc (for information):

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Friday, July 18, 1969

Time: 2:00 P.M.

SUBJECT:

President' request for the setting-up of a pro-Vietnam Committee.

ACTION REQUESTED:

☒ For Necessary Action☐ For Your Recommendations☐ Prepare Agenda and Brief☐ Draft Reply☐ For Your Comments☐ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

Please submit a report of what actions are taken to comply with the attached request.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

326
K. R. COLE, JR.
For the President

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and
261

ACTION

SECRET

July 11, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Dean Moor
THROUGH: John Holdridge
SUBJECT: Presidential Request

The President is concerned over the formation of Arthur Flemming's new committee, which is urging him in its public statements and letters to promptly end, "and not simply de-Americanize," the war in Vietnam. The President believes that the Administration should be able to get another group of prominent Americans together who would advocate the reverse. He thinks that Nelson Rockefeller might undertake this task (Tab A).

The President has asked that you and John Erlichman jointly look into the possibility of organizing such a group and keep him informed. It is my understanding from Mr. Erlichman's office that he believes you should take the main action in connection with this request and that he has so informed you by memorandum.

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- 2 -

-- It would involve the Administration in an effort to create a managed opinion element in influential American circles, a practice which tended largely to deepen the creditability gap for the last Administration.

The only in hand organization that might fill the bill is the so-called Douglas Committee with which we are in touch, and which has undertaken a very low-posture support for U. S. policy since 20 January. Some of its members, however, say that this group is finding it increasingly difficult to take a united stand behind present U. S. policy, and it is therefore questionable whether they would be interested in taking a position such as the President apparently envisions. The Douglas group, moreover, has consistently sought to avoid any overt suggestion of support for Administration policy per se.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you discuss this request personally with Mr. Erlichman informing him of your reservations concerning its advisability, and suggesting that a joint memorandum be prepared for the President outlining the pitfalls and difficulties inherent in the proposal.

Attachment

DM:mlb (7/11/69)

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CONFIDENTIAL
ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.: 609

261

Date: Tuesday, July 8, 1969

Time: 2:45 P.M.

FOR ACTION: J. ERHLICHMAN
H. KISSINGER

cc (for information):

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Tuesday, July 15, 1969

Time: 2:00 P.M.

SUBJECT:

President's request for assemblage of a group of prominent Americans who support the Administration's position in Vietnam.

ACTION REQUESTED:

_____ For Necessary Action

_____ For Your Recommendations

_____ Prepare Agenda and Brief

_____ Draft Reply

_____ For Your Comments

_____ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

Please submit a joint report for what actions should be taken to concur with the attached request.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone

K. R. COLE, JR.

261

July 7, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER ✓
MR. EHRLICHMAN

The President has just read in a news summary that a group of 28 prominent Americans headed by Arthur Flemming are urging him to take new initiatives to end, "and not simply de-Americanize", the war in Vietnam. The news piece goes on to say that the Flemming group proposes specifically that the United States abandon its present policy of maintaining maximum military pressure on the enemy and begin reducing the scale of fighting "in every possible way" ... looking toward the prompt achievement of a standstill ceasefire. (Some of the 28 persons are: Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Dr. Andrew Cordier; Edwin Reischauer; Hans Morgenthau; Senator Tydings; and William B. Arthur, editor of Look magazine.)

With reference to this report the President wanted each of you to know that in his opinion we should most certainly be able to get another "28 prominent Americans" who would advocate the reverse. The thought occurred to him that quite possibly Nelson Rockefeller would undertake this ... and that it would be most effective if he were to do so.

Please look into the possibilities here and keep the President informed.

Thank you.


ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD

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July 7, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER (Information Only)
MR. EHRLICHMAN (Information Only)

A recent Frank Reynolds TV commentary dealt with Secretary Rogers' press conference ... but the thrust of the views expressed by Reynolds was that we should reduce the level of fighting by stopping our offensive operations.

The President noted that this was the same view taken by the Arthur Flemming group, and that the "halting of our offensive operations" seems to represent the new line.

ALEXANDER P. BUTTERFIELD

NO 005 A ET A 18

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE

REFERRAL

To: State Secretariat

Date: 7/9/69

ACTION REQUESTED

- ☐ Draft reply for:
☐ President's signature.
☐ Undersigned's signature.
- ☐ Memorandum for use as enclosure to reply.
- ☐ Direct reply.
☐ Furnish information copy.
- ☐ Suitable acknowledgment or other appropriate handling.
☐ Furnish copy of reply, if any.
- ☐ For your information.
- ☐ For comment.

NOTE

Prompt action is essential.

If more than 48 hours' delay is encountered, please telephone the undersigned immediately, Code 1450.

Basic correspondence should be returned when draft reply, memorandum, or comment is requested.

REMARKS:

This appears to be identical to the telegram Arthur Flemming sent the President dated July 2 which was sent to the Department for direct reply.

Description:

☒ Letter: ☐ Telegram: ☐ Other:

To: President
From: Arthur S. Flemming, President, National Council of Churches
Date: 6/30
Subject: Vietnam

By direction of the President:

Richard A. Moore



department of international affairs

national council of the churches of christ in the u.s.a

475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10027

telephone: (212) 870-2724

ARTHUR S. FLEMMING, president

R. H. EDWIN ESPY, general secretary

ERNEST A. GROSS
chairman

ROBERT S. BILHEIMER
executive director

June 30, 1969

President Richard Nixon
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

In pursuance of its long-standing, deep concern with the Vietnam war, the National Council of Churches convened on June 20-21 a meeting of highly qualified people to consider the present stage of the conflict. The results are embodied in the main text herewith transmitted, which the signatories, six of whom were prevented from participating personally in the meeting, hope will be helpful in your efforts to secure peace.

Since the composition of this letter, press reports have conveyed statements by representatives of the Hanoi Government which pose severe difficulties that the group I am certain would recognize. Congressmen Morse and McCloskey wish me to report their view that the announcement of a date for troop withdrawal (point 3 of the letter) and the pursuit of the negotiations suggested (point 1 of the letter) present particularly difficult objectives in the light of these recent Hanoi statements. In regard to these statements, however, we all continue to be convinced of the necessity of a broadly representative interim body and subsequent government in South Vietnam, as suggested in the group letter.

Sincerely,

Arthur S. Fleming
Arthur S. Fleming

copy: The Secretary of State



Department of International Affairs

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10027

Telephone: (212) 870-2724

ARTHUR S. FLEMMING, President

R. H. EDWIN ESPY, General Secretary

ERNEST A. GROSS
Chairman

ROBERT S. BILHEIMER
Executive Director

June 30, 1969

President Richard Nixon
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

As Americans who join you in the hope for an early and permanent peace in Vietnam, we support your decision to withdraw United States forces from Vietnam, beginning by the redeployment of 25,000 combat soldiers from the area this summer. We welcome the direction of the Vietnam policy of your Administration as indicated in your address to the nation on May 14 and your press conference on June 19, particularly your public commitment to accept any government in South Vietnam that results from the free choice of the South Vietnamese people, and not to perpetuate military bases in Vietnam or seek military ties with the future South Vietnamese government.

We believe, however, that additional steps are now required. The demands of the American public, the repression in South Vietnam, and the meager progress in Paris necessitate new initiatives to end, and not simply de-Americanize, the war. We therefore propose the following:

1. To press vigorously toward an early negotiated settlement of the Vietnam War by simultaneously
 - a) replacing the strategy of maximum military pressure on the other side in South Vietnam by a policy of reducing the scale of fighting in every possible way, looking toward the prompt achievement of a standstill ceasefire, and
 - b) seeking agreement through the Paris negotiations on an interim body which will be broadly representative of all political, religious, social and ethnic groups in South Vietnam (and not merely the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam), designed to lead to the creation of a government that gives full expression to the political

will of the people of South Vietnam, this government to have, by prior agreement in Paris, the specific authority to:

- 1) require the withdrawal of external military forces from South Vietnam, and
 - ii) determine its future relationship with North Vietnam, and with other countries.
2. To make clear that the United States will not continue to support any regime in South Vietnam that is not broadly representative and does not extend normal political liberties to its people;
 3. To make clear to the American people, as well as the Vietnamese, a specific date by which the United States will have completed the withdrawal from South Vietnam of all its military forces; and
 4. To repeat again in clear terms the moral commitment of this country to help meet humanitarian needs in Vietnam, both North and South.

In our judgment, Mr. President, the interconnected actions we have outlined are now politically possible here at home, and essential in Vietnam to any "peace we can live with and be proud of". Believing that the United States now has a unique opportunity, we pledge our whole-hearted support for such an honest ending of this war.

Yours sincerely,

Art. & S. L.

NAME

IDENTIFICATION

Arthur S. Flemming	President, National Council of Churches, New York
R.H. Edwin Espy	General Secretary, National Council of Churches
Ernest A. Gross	Chairman, Department of International Affairs, National Council of Churches
Morris B. Abram	President, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.
William B. Arthur	Editor, LOOK Magazine, New York
Harold J. Berman	Professor, Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Mass.
Robert S. Bilheimer	National Council of Churches
Robert S. Browne,	Professor, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck
John H. Burt	Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, Cleveland, Ohio
Jeffrey Cohelan	United States House of Representatives (California) Washington, D.C.
Andrew Cordier	President, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
Gerhard Elston	National Council of Churches
Paul C. Empie	Lutheran Church in America
George F. Harkins	Lutheran Church in America
Tracey K. Jones, Jr.	Chairman, Advisory Committee for Peace, National Council of Churches
Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.	

Paul N. McCloskey, Jr.

United States House of Representatives (California)
Washington, D.C.

Kenneth W. Morgan

Professor, Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y.

Hans J. Morgenthau

Professor, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

F. Bradford Morse

United States House of Representatives (Massachusetts)
Washington, D.C.

Allan M. Parrent

National Council of Churches

Edwin O. Reischauer

Professor, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Howard Schomer

National Council of Churches

John Coventry Smith

Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations,
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

John Sommer

Author, Vietnam - The Unheard Voices, New York

David M. Stowe

United Church of Christ

Joseph D. Tydings

United States Senate (Maryland) Washington, D.C.

All the signatories are acting as individuals, and organizational connections are given only for purposes of identification.